

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A game machine for executing a predetermined game in response to a player's operation, comprising:

a display means for displaying that displays a game screen;

operation switches operated by the player;

an operation pattern data storage means for storing memory that stores operation pattern data including operation timing data defining an operation timing of said operation switches to be operated by the player, and operation type data defining which type of said operation switches is to be operated with the operation timing;

a display control means for having controller that controls said display means to sequentially displayed, based on said operation pattern data, information about the operation timings and the types of said operation switches to be operated by the player;

an evaluation means for section that successively evaluates evaluating, with the progress of the game, correlation between the operation timings and types of said operation switches operated by the player responding to the information displayed on said display means, and the operation timings and types defined by said operation pattern data; and

difficulty level change means for section that, in response to a difficulty level having been set low, skips or changes at least a portion of said operation type data

without skipping or changing said operation timing data, and controls said display controller to perform display control and said evaluation section to perform evaluation~~dynamically changing a difficulty level of a game operation input in accordance with the evaluation made by said evaluation means for a predetermined period.~~

2. (currently amended) The game machine according to claim 1, further comprising:

music data storage ~~means for storing~~ memory that stores music data;

music data reproduction ~~means for reproducing~~ section that reproduces said music data; and

~~presentation effect generation means for generating~~ generator that generates a predetermined presentation effect responding to how said operation switches are operated, wherein

said operation pattern data storage ~~means~~ memory previously stores, corresponding to said music data, the operation pattern data defining which type of said operation switches is to be operated by the player with what timing, and

said display ~~control means~~ controller has said display ~~means~~ sequentially displayed the information about the operation timings and the types of said operation switches to be operated by the player responding to said music data reproduced by said music data reproduction ~~means~~ section.

3.-5. (canceled)

6. (currently amended) The game machine according to claim 1,
wherein

said difficulty level change ~~means~~ section controls said display ~~control means~~
controller to have said display ~~means~~ displayed display said operation timings and the
types defined by said operation pattern data in a different tempo.

7. (currently amended) The game machine according to claim 31,
wherein

said difficulty level change ~~means~~ section skips said operation type data
~~responding in response~~ to said evaluation being poor, controls said display ~~control means~~
controller to have said display ~~means~~ to performed a display, and controls said evaluation
~~means~~ section to perform evaluation only in terms of the correlation between the
operation timings of said operation switches operated by the player and the operation
timings defined by said operation pattern data.

8. (currently amended) The game machine according to claim 51,
wherein

responding to said evaluation being poor, said difficulty level change ~~means~~
section changes said operation type data defining a specific type of said operation

switches to data of any other type of the operation switches which is easier in operation, controls said display ~~control means~~ controller to have said display ~~means to~~ performed perform a display, and controls said evaluation ~~means~~ section to evaluate the correlation between the operation timings and the types of said operation switches operated by the player and the operation timings defined by said operation pattern data and the types of the changed operation switches.

9. (currently amended) The game machine according to claim 1,
wherein

said operation type data defines that a plurality of types of said operation switches are operated simultaneously, and

responding to said evaluation being poor, said difficulty level change ~~means~~ section skips the data relating at least to one type of said operation switches out of the plurality of types of said operation switches to be operated simultaneously, and controls said display ~~control means~~ controller to perform a display and said evaluation ~~means~~ section to perform evaluation.

10. (currently amended) The game machine according to claim 2,
wherein

said presentation effect ~~generation means~~ generator always generates the presentation effect corresponding to the types of said operation switches defined by said

operation pattern data ~~irrelevant~~ irrespective of to the control by said difficulty level
change ~~means~~ section.

11. (currently amended) The game machine according to claim 1,
wherein
when the operation timings and types of said operation switches operated by the
player coincide with the operation timings and types defined by said operation pattern
data, said evaluation ~~means~~ section increases a game score, and differs the increase of the
game score according to the difficulty level.

12. (currently amended) The game machine according to claim 1,
wherein
said evaluation ~~means~~ section evaluates a coincidence between the operation
timings defined by said operation pattern data and the operation timings of said operation
switches operated by the player based on a predetermined allowable range extending
from the operation timings defined by said operation pattern data.

13. (original) The game machine according to claim 12, wherein
said allowable range is differed based on the difficulty level.

14. (currently amended) A program for controlling a game executed in a game machine, comprising:

a step of reading predetermined operation pattern data including operation timing data defining an operation timing of operation switches to be operated by a player, and operation type data defining which type of the operation switches is to be operated with the operation timing;

a step of having a display means of the game machine sequentially displayed, based on said operation pattern data, information about the operation timings and the types of said operation switches to be operated by the player;

a step of successively evaluating, with the progress of the game, a correlation between the operation timings and types of said operation switches operated by the player responding to the information displayed on said display ~~means~~, and the operation timings and types defined by said operation pattern data; ~~and~~

in response to a difficulty level having been set low, a step of skipping or changing at least a portion of said operation type data without skipping or changing said operation timing data;

in accordance with said step of skipping or changing, a step of having said display of the game machine display information about the operation timings and the types of said operation switches to be operated by the player; and

a step of evaluating a correlation between the operation timings and types of said operation switches operated by the player responding to the information displayed on said

~~display, and the operation timings and types defined by said operation pattern data a step of dynamically changing a difficulty level of a game operation input in accordance with the evaluation made by said evaluation means for a predetermined period.~~

15. (currently amended) A program of a music game executed by a game machine, comprising:

a step of reading predetermined music data;

a step of reproducing said music data;

a step of generating a predetermined presentation effect responding to a player's operation of operation switches;

a step of reading predetermined operation pattern data including, corresponding to said music data, operation timing data defining an operation timing of operation switches to be operated by the player, and operation type data defining which type of the operation switches is to be operated with the operation timing;

a step of having a display means of the game machine sequentially displayed, based on said operation pattern data, information about the operation timings and the types of said operation switches to be operated by the player corresponding to reproduction of said music data;

a step of successively evaluating, with the progress of the game, a correlation between the operation timings and types of said operation switches operated by the player

responding to the information displayed on said display ~~means~~, and the operation timings and types defined by said operation pattern data; and

in response to a difficulty level having been set low, a step of skipping or changing at least a portion of said operation type data without skipping or changing said operation timing data;

in accordance with said step of skipping or changing, a step of having said display of the game machine display information about the operation timings and the types of said operation switches to be operated by the player; and

a step of evaluating a correlation between the operation timings and types of said operation switches operated by the player responding to the information displayed on said display, and the operation timings and types defined by said operation pattern data—a step of dynamically changing a difficulty level of a game operation input in accordance with the evaluation made by said evaluation means for a predetermined period.

16.-18. (canceled)

19. (currently amended) The program according to claim 14, wherein
in response to an instruction made in said changing step, said displaying step has
said display ~~means displayed~~ said operation timings and the types defined by said
operation pattern data in a different tempo.

20. (currently amended) The program according to claim ~~16~~14, wherein
in response to an instruction made in said changing step corresponding to said
evaluation being poor, said displaying step skips said operation type data ~~and has said~~
~~display control means performed display~~, and said evaluating step evaluates only in terms
of the correlation between the operation timings of said operation switches operated by
the player and the operation timings defined by said operation pattern data.

21. (currently amended) The program according to claim ~~18~~14, wherein
in response to an instruction made in said changing step corresponding to said
evaluation being poor, said displaying step changes said operation type data defining a
specific type of the operation switches to data of any other type of the operation switches
which is easier in operation ~~and has said display control means performed display~~, and
said evaluating step evaluates the correlation between the operation timings and the types
of said operation switches operated by the player and the operation timings defined by
said operation pattern data and the types of the changed operation switches.

22. (original) The program according to claim 14, wherein
said operation type data defines that a plurality of types of said operation switches
are operated simultaneously, and
in response to an instruction made in said changing step corresponding to said
evaluation being poor, the data relating at least to one type of said operation switches out

of the plurality of types of said operation switches to be operated simultaneously is skipped, said displaying step performs display, and said evaluating step performs evaluation.

23. (currently amended) The program according to claim 15, wherein said generating step always generates the presentation effect corresponding to the types of said operation switches defined by said operation pattern data ~~irrelevant~~ irrespective of the instruction made in said changing step.

24. (original) The program according to claim 14, further comprising a step of, when the operation timings and types of said operation switches operated by the player coincide with the operation timings and types defined by said operation pattern data, increasing a game score and differing the increase of the game score according to the difficulty level.

25. (original) The program according to claim 14, wherein said evaluating step evaluates a coincidence between the operation timings defined by said operation pattern data and the operation timings of said operation switches operated by the player based on a predetermined allowable range extending from the operation timings defined by said operation pattern data.

26. (original) The program according to claim 25, wherein
said allowable range is differed based on the difficulty level.

27. (new) In a software-controlled video game machine of the type
including a plurality of user-operated switches, a method of automatically changing a
difficulty level of a game during game execution, the method comprising:

displaying information relating to designated operation timings and types of
switches to be operated by a user;

receiving information relating to actual operation timings and types of switches
operated by the user;

comparing the information relating to the designated operation timings and types
of switches to be operated by the user and the information relating to the actual operation
timings and types of switches operated by the user; and

automatically changing the difficulty level of the game during game execution
based on the comparison by changing the information relating to the types of switches to
be operated by the user but without changing the information relating to the operation
timing of the switches to be operated by the user.

28. (new) The method of claim 27 wherein the difficulty level of the
game is automatically changed to a less difficult level based on the comparison by
decreasing the number of types of switches in the displayed information without

changing the information relating to the operation timings of the switches to be operated by the user.

29. (new) The method of claim 27 wherein the difficulty level of the game is automatically changed to a more difficult level based on the comparison by increasing the number of types of switches in the displayed information without changing the information relating to the operation timings of the switches to be operated by the user.

30. (new) In a software-controlled video game machine of the type including a plurality of user-operated switches, a method comprising:

displaying information relating to designated operation timings and types of switches to be operated by a user, the number of different types of switches being equal to a certain number;

receiving information relating to actual operation timings and types of switches operated by the user;

comparing the information relating to the designated operation timings and types of switches to be operated by the user and the information relating to the actual operation timings and types of switches operated by the user; and

automatically changing the display of information relating to designated operation timings and types of switches to be operated by a user based on the comparison by

changing the number of the different types of switches so that the number of the different types of switches displayed is no longer equal to the certain number, but without changing the information relating to the operation timings of the switches to be operated.

31. (new) A video game machine comprising:
a display;
a plurality of user operable switches;
a memory that stores information relating to designated operation timings and types of switches to be operated by a user during game execution, the information being displayed on the display; and
a processor that receives information relating to actual operation timings and types of switches operated by the user, compares the information relating to the designated operation timings and types of switches with the information relating to the actual operation timings and types of switches operated by the user, and automatically changes the difficulty level of a game during game execution based on the comparison by changing the information relating to the types of switches to be operated by the user but without changing the information relating to the operation timings of the switch operation.

32. (new) The machine of claim 31 wherein the processor automatically changes the difficulty level of the game to a less difficult level based on the comparison

by decreasing the number of types switches in the information being displayed on the display without changing the information relating to the operation timings of the switch operation.

33. (new) The machine of claim 31 wherein the processor automatically changes the difficulty level of the game to a more difficult level based on the comparison by increasing the number of types switches in the information being displayed on the display without changing the information relating to the operation timings of the switch operation.